

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

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Garrison's Tactics Discredit Idea That He Has Evidence

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New Orleans' loud-mouth district attorney, Jim Garrison, owes it to this country to put up or shut up on his claim that he has "solved" the Kennedy assassination case.

If by some off chance Garrison has found a real conspiracy behind the late President's murder, he has discredited his own case almost beyond repair by his circus-like performance.

The Kennedy case leaves room for all sorts of fast and loose theories. Especially after the death of Lee Harvey Oswald, it became almost impossible to prove "what did not happen" in connection with the President's slaying. The Warren Commission could only examine the evidence that was available. And in many ways, the commission did a sloppy job of that.

But this is still no excuse for Garrison's performance. By accident or design, he has, as one television network charged, played on the "nation's sorrow and doubts" about the Kennedy case. What's more, he has exploited passing public attitudes to support sensational charges of the most reckless sort.

Garrison jumped on the national stage last February with an impressive performance. It was his first and last.

He "reluctantly" admitted he was investigating a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. He said he was sorry the case had been prematurely publicized. And he announced he would grant no more press interviews.

Within two days he was dropping sensational charges and giving interviews that haven't stopped yet and haven't yet been substantiated on any truly significant particular. He promptly labeled David William Ferrie (a New Orleans oddball the FBI had checked out years before) as "one of history's most important individuals."

Then he began fingering a weird collection of New Orleans characters, quarreling with television networks and hinting of dark deeds in high places. On May 21, the man who wanted no more interviews explained via a New Orleans television program that Kennedy was gunned down by

five anti-Castro Cubans angered at Kennedy's handling of the Bay of Pigs invasion.

This charge neatly implicated the Central Intelligence Agency (which was getting a lot of adverse general criticism at the time) since Garrison insisted the CIA knew all these men, was hampering his investigation and had even misled the Warren Commission.

As summer came on, Garrison had one indictment. It was based on the testimony of an individual who reportedly told a Washington Post reporter he would point out flaws in his own evidence for a price. One of Garrison's chief investigators had quit after claiming this one indictment (against Clay Shaw) should be dropped for lack of evidence.

After a summer perjury trial of a New Orleans attorney convicted of lying when he said he couldn't identify Shaw's voice, Garrison amplified his solution to the Kennedy case in a copyrighted article in Playboy magazine. The killing was the work of of a "precision guerrilla team of at least seven men" who formerly worked for the CIA.

By December, Garrison had another individual to charge directly in his conspiracy case—an associate of far right radio preacher Carl McIntire. But again this charge, whatever its validity or lack of validity, is wrapped in a cloak of sensational innuendo that now implies J. Edgar Hoover and President Johnson are somehow keeping the truth about the Kennedy case from the American people and may even have worse things to account for.

These latest revelations came to the American public during a press conference at which Garrison, the man who didn't want any publicity, was on hand to help publicize a Ramparts magazine article on the assassination.

At this point, his whole "investigation" has become such a cheap, vulgar show that the public could hardly credit Garrison with proving a genuine conspiracy if he suddenly appeared like Moses with evidence from on high on stone tablets.

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